

Make the Macapagal-Arroyo regime pay dearly for its support of warmongering against Iraq

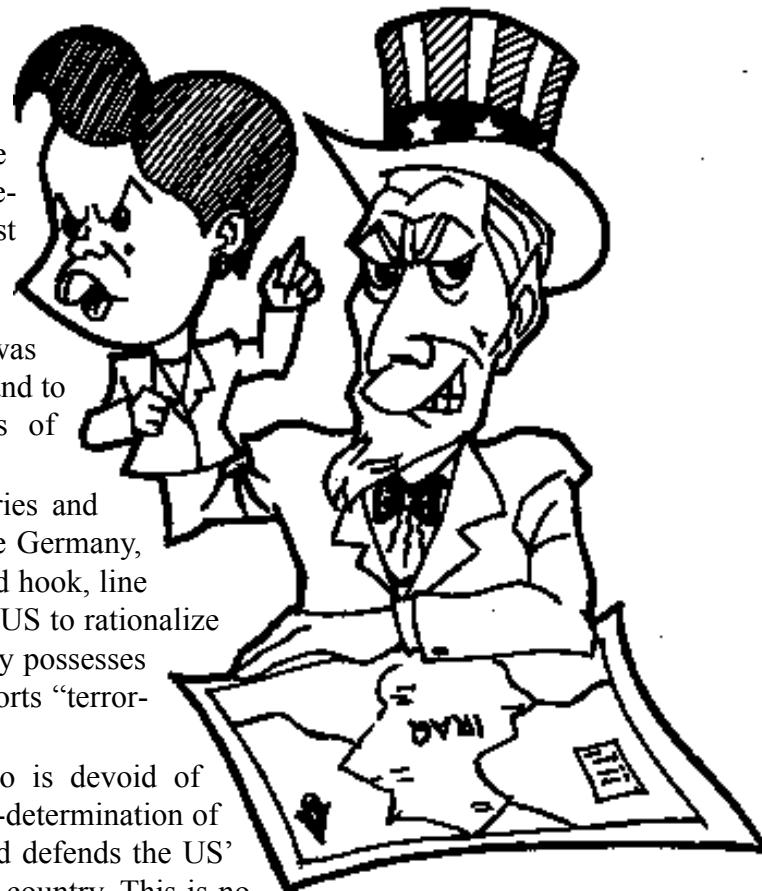
Macapagal-Arroyo's blind and shameless support for US imperialism's plan to attack Iraq is despicable. In all of Asia, it is only the Macapagal-Arroyo government that has given immediate and unquestioned support for the imperialist war.

Even without any request from the US, Macapagal-Arroyo announced that her government was ready to grant the US access to Philippine airspace and to various infrastructure needed for the operations of American troops.

Despite doubts by many of the world's countries and even by several UN Security Council members like Germany, France, Russia and China, the regime has swallowed hook, line and sinker the "pieces of evidence" released by the US to rationalize its plan to attack and seize Iraq: that Iraq supposedly possesses and harbors weapons of mass destruction and supports "terrorism."

Like her imperialist master, Macapagal-Arroyo is devoid of respect for the national sovereignty and right to self-determination of the Iraqi people and government. She promotes and defends the US' arrogant and unilateral plan to attack and seize any country. This is no different from her puppet advocacy of US imperialism's moves to ravish the national sovereignty of, and further plunder and oppress, the Philippines.

Neither does she hesitate to endanger the millions of Filipino workers now employed in the Middle East. During her hypocritical trip to Kuwait in the first week of February, she herself took the lead in convincing Filipinos there to accept the US' justifications for attacking Iraq.



In exchange, she gets scraps of aid and loans that her bankrupt and corrupt regime thoroughly craves.

THE MACAPAGAL-ARROYO REGIME WILL PAY DEARLY for its blind and shameless obsequiousness to US imperialism's every desire. This will lead to her regime's further isolation from the Filipino people who are strongly opposed to the impending US attack on Iraq.

Presently, the Filipino people's national united front against imperialist war is further expanding. It is composed of patriotic and democratic organizations of the toiling masses, civic groups, politicians, religious organizations and even Catholic church institutions and Islamic groups.

These forces have a broad basis of unity encompassing those who resist the imperialist violation of the sovereignty of nations, those concerned about the welfare of Filipino workers in Iraq and the Middle East, those who do not want the Philippines entangled

in a war it has nothing to do with and those who simply do not want war. The most thoroughgoing in their resistance are the revolutionary and anti-imperialist forces.

The united front against imperialist war likewise fiercely opposes the presence of American troops in the Philippines. The approximately 1,300 American soldiers in the Philippines may be used to support US military operations in the Middle East. Worse, there are threats to use American forces in combat operations in the Philippines. It has been reported that US President George W. Bush and Macapagal-Arroyo have already agreed on the deployment of four teams of US Green Berets to fight the Abu Sayyaf. It would not be farfetched for American troops to be used against the revolutionary forces in the country.

It is a patriotic and internationalist duty of the Communist Party and the Filipino people to unite with the Iraqi people in defending their sovereignty against US imperialist attack and occupation. The Party and peoples opposed to imperialism and war unite with the American people and the peoples of Europe, Asia and other parts of the globe in resisting the warmongering moves of the Bush government.

The Filipino people's contribution in helping the Iraqi people and the international united front against imperialist war is to resist Macapagal-Arroyo's all-out puppetry and its plans to give the US access to our territory as a staging and transit point for American attack troops and equipment.

The New People's Army's contribution to the international united front against imperialist war is to intensify tactical offensives against the mercenary AFP and PNP troops in order to weaken the puppet Macapagal-Arroyo regime.

IN MANIFESTING HER ABSOLUTE LOYALTY TO HER imperialist master, Macapagal-Arroyo has now become infamous the world over as one of the most loyal puppets of US imperialism. History will also judge her as one of the worst of all the past puppet presidents of the Philippines. **AB**



CONTENTS

Volume XXXIII, No. 2, February 2003

- 1 **Editorial: Make the Macapagal-Arroyo regime pay dearly for its support of warmongering against Iraq!**
- 3 **International opposition to war against Iraq widespread**
- 4 **Major protest actions worldwide**
- 5 **Protest actions in the Philippines against US threats of war against Iraq spreading**
- 5 **Criminal and counterrevolutionary Romulo Kintanar meted punishment**
- 7 **Fraud in economic statistics bared**
- 8 **Macapagal-Arroyo now openly favors cha-cha**
- 9 **The crisis concealed by Bush's warmongering**
- 10 **Reports from correspondents: Corn prices raised in Cagayan and Isabela; (11) Peasant campaigns in the Ilocos region; (12) How Mang Ador got his land back**
- 13 **Dekada '70: A socially relevant film**
- 14 **NEWS**

International opposition to invasion of Iraq widespread

In almost two years of bribery, coercion and active campaigning by the US, support for US imperialism's plan to invade and occupy Iraq remains tenuous. Instead, the movement against US imperialism's destructive and plundering bellicose policy has further intensified and expanded along with opposition even from its own allied governments.

US officials are hard put justifying plans to wage war on Iraq. Iraq is being forced to destroy weapons of mass destruction that have yet to be seen and whose possession Iraq continues to deny. After the United Nations weapons inspection team failed to prove the existence of these weapons, the US is now forcing others to accept its "evidence" on the existence of the weapons of mass destruction supposedly gathered by its "intelligence" community as a "solid basis" for the war it wishes to wage.

Clearly, the US is merely concocting issues to justify its invasion of Iraq with the aim of setting up a puppet regime, controlling Iraqi oil reserves and enhancing its strength as the sole international superpower.

The US brags that its actions are not premised on other countries' approval. According to Bush, the US will invade Iraq even if it must do it alone and no matter what others might say. The US continues to build up its forces in the Persian Gulf and Kuwait, where there are now more than 70,000 American troops.

In the face of all this, worldwide opposition from peoples and governments to the US' disregard for the principles and processes of international relations and the right of the Iraqi people to self-determi-

nation is spreading. More and more people believe that it is the US, and not Iraq, that poses the biggest threat to world security, and that it is the US that should dismantle its own arsenal of weapons of mass destruction.

Growing numbers of countries are distancing themselves from the US' bellicose policy and its readiness to use its economic, political and military power to ensure a firmer grip on the world as the sole superpower. Among those strongly opposed to waging war on Iraq are large member-countries of the United Nations Security Council like Russia, China, France and Germany. These countries have their own interests in the Middle East and are worried that the substantial oil reserves in Iraq will be placed under US power. Most countries have been warning the US not to preempt the UN with a unilateral declaration of war.

In its intense anger over Germany's strong opposition to the war, the US has classified it along with anti-imperialists Cuba and Libya as countries that are "unreliable in the war against Iraq" and warned that they would pay for it after the conflict. For the US, this new classification comes second to the "Axis of Evil" composed of Iraq, Iran and North Korea.

Aside from the Philippines and



Australia, none of the US' other allied countries in the Asia-Pacific and the Middle East openly and zealously supports it.

Only a few governments in other parts of the globe rabidly support the US. One of them is Tony Blair's government in the United Kingdom, which is quickly being isolated from the British people because of its connivance with the US in waging war on Iraq.

Within the US, more and more Americans are opposing their government's bellicose foreign policy. They continue to wage huge demonstrations that equal the gigantic rallies against the US war of aggression on the Vietnamese people from the 1960s to the mid-1970s. Various organizations and sectors are actively arousing, mobilizing and organizing the American people against the US' latest scheme. They respond to every bellicose move and repressive policy by the Bush government by waging lively and vibrant protest actions.

In various parts of the globe, from the streets of Europe up to Latin America and Asia, millions of people are joining humongous demonstrations to oppose US plans to invade Iraq.

The international united front against the US' arrogant and unilateral threat to wage war on Iraq continues to expand. At the core of such unity are the proletarian revolutionary forces that are the most

thoroughgoing in their anti-imperialist stand and in defending Iraq's sovereignty.

Anti-imperialists and revolutionary forces and other protesters outrightly condemn US imperialism's

bellicose policies and character. They cry out not only their opposition to plans to invade Iraq but also their call to put a stop to all of US imperialism's wars of aggression in various parts of the world. **AB**

Major protest actions

Indonesia, February 9: Up to 50,000 protested in front of the US embassy. This was the biggest anti-war rally in Indonesia.

Switzerland, January 26: Some 1,500 demonstrators rallied at the World Economic Forum as US Secretary of State Colin Powell delivered a speech.

Indonesia, January 26: Some 2,000 people rallied in front of the US embassy to assail US plans to invade Iraq.

Greece, January 26: Thousands of people from various groups rallied in the southern part of the country.

Australia, January 25: Almost a thousand people rallied in Australia as the Australian government sent soldiers to the Middle East in support of the US.

Germany, January 25: Thousands marched in the streets. Demonstrators blocked roads leading to NATO facilities and picketed in front of US buildings. Up to 10,000 joined a protest action in the city of Cologne.

France, January 19: Up to 200,000 rallied in Paris and 41 other cities in France. In Paris, 25,000 persons marched.

Japan, January 19: Some 5,000 persons marched in the central commercial district of Tokyo.

Scotland and London, January 19: Up to 10,000 persons launched separate marches.

Ireland, January 19: More than 2,000 protested their government's decision to grant the US permission to use Shannon Airport against Iraq.

Spain, January 19: Up to 30,000 rallied in Madrid.

Belgium, January 19: Some 10,000 persons

marched in Brussels.

Sweden, January 19: Four-thousand rallied in Gottenburgh. "Drop Bush, not bombs," they cried.

Syria, January 19: Some 15,000 marched through the central city.

Egypt, January 19: Some 1,000 rallied in the city of Cairo and called on their government not to allow the US and Great Britain to use the Suez Canal.

Lebanon, January 19: Eight-thousand rallied in front of the United Nations office in Northern Beirut.

Russia, January 19: Hundreds rallied in front of the US embassy.

Italy, January 18: Five-thousand Italian protesters gathered in the city of Florence. Protests were also held in the cities of Milan, Bologna, Rome and Naples.

U.S.A., January 18-19: Various US groups designated these dates as coordinated national days of protest in commemoration of Martin Luther King, an activist who led the people's movement against the oppression of African-Americans like himself as well as the US war in Vietnam.

According to the international coalition ANSWER that organized the rally, up to 500,000 demonstrated in Washington, DC. This was one of the biggest rallies in US history since the Vietnam war in the 1970s. A highlight of the affair was the participation of many Filipinos living in the US. Up to 350,000 likewise rallied in San Francisco and tens of thousands of others in 38 cities in the US.

Canada, January 18: No less than 52,000 persons rallied in 30 cities in Canada. The biggest rallies were held in Montreal (25,000) and Vancouver (15,000). **AB**

Protest actions in the Philippines against US' war threat vs. Iraq spreading

The Filipino people's unity against US threats to invade Iraq is ever expanding.

Among the latest entities that declared its stand against the US war is the Catholic church. "We are not anti-American. We are anti-war," declared Jaime Cardinal Sin in his pastoral letter read at "Stand for Peace," a prayer-rally held in Plaza Miranda, Quiapo, Manila on January 31. The archbishop of Manila also warned the Macapagal-Arroyo regime not to support the Bush government's plans.

"Let us make a stand for peace!" said Vice President Teofisto Guingona. He encouraged the Filipino people to resist any attempt by the US to wage war.

More than 5,000 from the workers', students', church and

other sectors joined the rally, including organizations allied with Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN), Muslim Solidarity for the People of Iraq (MUSPI) and the Moro-Christian People's Alliance. Also at the rally were personalities like former Sen. Wigberto Tañada and Archbishop Casausa of Iraq.

Prior to this, MUSPI held a short program at the Golden Mosque Compound in Quiapo and at the Islamic Center, after which its members proceeded to Plaza Miranda where they lit candles for peace, simultaneous with other cities and towns in the country.

That same day, some 500 anti-war activists joined the "March

Rally for Peace, Freedom and Sovereignty" led by BAYAN-Central Luzon. They marched in the streets of Angeles City and rallied at the Clark Special Economic Zone. Students, farmers and workers from Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, Bulacan and Bataan joined the march.

They also criticized the Macapagal-Arroyo regime for the continued presence of American troops in the Philippines in the name of "humanitarian missions" and "joint training exercises" like Bayanihan in Mindanao and Balance Piston 03-05 in the former US military bases in Luzon.

Meanwhile, at the Senate, four senators (Joker Arroyo, Francis Pangilinan, Ralph Recto and Noli de Castro) sponsored a resolution calling on Macapagal-Arroyo to be more circumspect on the US-Iraq issue. Senator Arroyo criticized the Philippine government for being the only government in all of Asia that has been strident about its support for the US war in Iraq. **AB**

Criminal and counterrevolutionary Romulo Kintanar meted punishment

Revolutionary punishment was meted on Romulo Kintanar, a rabid criminal and counterrevolutionary, on January 23 in Quezon City. This was implemented by a special NPA unit after he had been sentenced by a special people's court in 2002. He was meted the maximum penalty on the basis of the many capital crimes he committed against the revolution and the people.

The first cases against Kintanar were filed at a special people's

court in 1993. All things considered, the seriousness of his cases

and his criminal accountabilities to the people and the revolutionary movement up to that time were sufficient to impose the maximum penalty on Kintanar.

The Party and the revolutionary movement have a policy where, in implementing revolutionary justice, the possibility of granting amnesty is raised and considered for anyone who shows genuine remorse and readiness to make rectifications for his or her wrongdoings. This policy was applied on all those who had betrayed the Party

and the revolutionary movement, including Kintanar. But in the long course of time, he showed not an iota of remorse nor did he make any form of rectification. The cases filed against him regarding his criminal and counterrevolutionary activities grew. In the review conducted by the special people's court on his cases, weight was given to new evidence that proved that he was an incorrigible criminal and counterrevolutionary who further indulged in his crimes after openly betraying the Party and the revolutionary movement. Foremost among them was being a military agent and his active assistance to the AFP and PNP's "anti-insurgency" campaign. Following are but a few of his biggest criminal accountabilities even when he still operated under false pretenses within the Party and the New People's Army:

1) Wanton abuse of authority within the Party and people's army in masterminding, conducting and spreading gangster and criminal operations. This included kidnapping for ransom, holdups of banks and other businesses, dollar counterfeiting and other crimes and anomalies. Through his connections with the reactionary government and the military, he was also involved in the large-scale plunder of government coffers for his personal indulgence.

He began his criminal activities as far back as the early 1980s in Davao City. They worsened by the middle to the late 1980s when he implemented



them on the national scale. He recruited dregs of society and connived with criminal syndicates, military and police forces and corrupt elements that eventually turned traitor along with him and were expelled from the Party and the NPA.

It was clear to Kintanar and his cohorts that such activities violated the policies and rules of the Party and the NPA and ran counter to the Party's campaign against gangsterism. Thus, they purposely concealed them from the Party. Through these activites, he and his cohorts raked in millions of pesos.

In 1986, Kintanar's group kidnapped Japanese businessman Noboyuki Wakaoji, taking \$10 million in ransom. In connivance with then CPP Visayas Commission secretary Arturo Tabara, Kintanar undertook the kidnapping of Bombo Radyo-Philippines owner and president Roger Florete, raking in P15 million.

2) Stealing huge amounts of funds from the movement. One of the biggest cases was discovered in 1991, wherein Kintanar took and stashed P30 million. Before he openly betrayed the Party, he likewise cleaned out Party funds from all the bank accounts that he knew of.

3) Attempts to divide and destroy the Party and revolutionary movement. Kintanar was one of those who masterminded factionalism and attempts to destroy the Party and the revolutionary movement. He avidly pushed the anti-Party campaign starting in September 1992. He encouraged the establishment of the counterrevolution-

ary RPA-ABB of Filemon Lagman and Arturo Tabara. He served as adviser on RPA-ABB policies until it adopted the policy of complete surrender to the reactionary government to become an instrument of the regime's counterrevolutionary operations.

Aside from this, he was also one of those who led the implementation of premature regularization, urban insurrectionism and other serious errors that brought harm to the Party and the revolutionary movement.

AFTER OPENLY BETRAYING THE PARTY in 1992, Kintanar's criminal and counterrevolutionary activities gained further momentum. He connived with the AFP and PNP against the Party and the revolutionary movement.

From 1992 until 2003, he was directly integrated into the AFP, PNP and NBI structures as well as other government intelligence agencies as a consultant, intelligence agent and special military and police operative against the revolutionary movement. This was confirmed by no less than Malacañang and the AFP after punishment was meted on him by the revolutionary movement. For his salary and front, he was made out to be a security consultant with the Bureau of Immigration and Deportation and the National Electrification Administration.

He used his long experience in the revolutionary movement to draft more effective policies and tactics against the New People's Army and against the Party in general. He directly connived with the ISAFP under Col. Victor Corpus in

Fraud in economic statistics bared

The Macapagal-Arroyo regime is so desperate to create a rosy picture of the Philippine economy. In a recent exposé, the government was found to have doctored economic data to make it appear that the country's economy has advanced.

Thus, doubts are widespread over Macapagal-Arroyo's much-vaunted announcement of a 4.6% growth in the gross domestic product (GDP) for 2002 and a 5.2% increase in the gross national product (GNP).

Padding and shaving of trade figures. It was the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and foreign financial corporations that first raised questions about the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' (BSP) report of a \$3.929 billion surplus in the balance of payments (BOP) last year. In reviewing the statistics, the BSP was discovered to have padded BOP figures by three to five billion dollars. According to the BSP's latest statistics, the BOP actually registered a \$339 million deficit. This is not surprising especially with the year having been marked by the

continued massive flight of foreign capital and debt payments that siphoned off a huge portion of the country's overall income.

It turns out that current account statistics were overstated by \$5 billion. This has spurred a congressional investigation that puts to question other vaunted government statistics. The achievement of such figures entailed the understatement of overall imports and the padding of overall export figures.

Rectifying anomalies in the

data would show that manufacturing actually dropped by a bigger percentage compared to what has been previously reported—a fact that could not be concealed even through the prettified statistics which show that manufacturing has been falling by three to five percent especially in recent months. Manufacturing accounts for a big portion of the country's exports and comprises 21% of the GDP. Thus, claims of a leap in the GDP and

GNP for 2002 were clearly a big swindle.

All things considered, the growth may even have been negative.

Fraud by foreign companies.

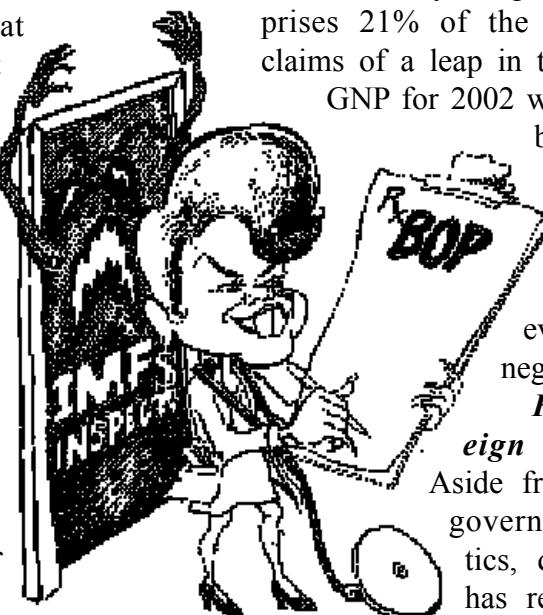
Aside from distorted government statistics, data analysis has revealed even worse cases of fraud and sabotage perpetrated by foreign companies in the country.

planning and implementing intelligence operations and psywar campaigns, sabotage operations, attacks and attempts to destroy NPA units and guerrilla zones.

In May 2000, he served as the project officer in a failed assassination attempt on Comrade Jose Maria Sison in The Netherlands. In this, he conspired with then PNP chief and now senator Panfilo Lacson.

Within the AFP and PNP, Kintanar became further mired in the operations of criminal syndicates, was involved in bureaucratic corruption and served as gun-for-hire for reactionary politicians and others who wanted to commission killings.

One of the hired killers under Kintanar and his uncle, former ISAFP chief, Gen. Galileo Kintanar, is Philip Medel, who is involved in the murder of actress Nida Blanca.



THE MAXIMUM PENALTY WAS METED ON KINTANAR NOT because of his espousal of the wrong ideological, political and organizational line but because of his serious criminal accountabilities to the revolutionary movement and the people. Resignation from the Party or leaving the revolutionary movement, or simply espousing the erroneous line or speaking against the Party are not considered crimes punishable by death.

Contrary to statements by the Macapagal-Arroyo regime and his criminal and traitorous cohorts, Kintanar was not an "ordinary civilian" and definitely not a hero. He was a bigtime criminal and a military, police and intelligence operative who relentlessly brought harm to the revolutionary movement and the people. Thus, he became a legitimate military target of the revolutionary movement. **AB**

Macapagal-Arroyo now openly favors cha-cha

It did not take long before Macapagal-Arroyo shed her pretensions of losing interest in remaining in power beyond 2004 either via elections or charter change. At any rate, she wasn't able to fool too many people with her "politically ascendant" stance. From the very start, it was clear that she was merely maneuvering to quell the growing disgust and hatred for her regime and open different options to enable her to stay in power.

On January 18, after a long period of playing hard-to-get, Macapagal-Arroyo declared that she was in favor of cha-cha. She declared her preference for a constitutional convention as a way of amending the constitution because this was supposedly less divisive. Macapagal-Arroyo makes it appear that she favors a constitutional convention because she has promised that elections would push through in 2004. Nonetheless, she does not oppose the stronger clamor for a constituent assembly and has in fact mobilized her partymates in the

senate and congress to form it immediately.

Compared to forming a constitutional convention, it is easier for the Macapagal-Arroyo regime to call a constituent assembly because this merely involves transforming the present senate and congress into one. The regime

would then be more confident about the composition of the body tasked with changing the constitution.

Like the previous puppet presidents and those now in power, Macapagal-Arroyo's desire to use the cha-cha to effect a peaceful power-sharing scheme and way of staying in power is quite obvious.

But it is also in the interest of the entire reactionary ruling class to advance charter change in the hope of alleviating the severe crisis and the people's widespread disgust for



Results of an investigation by the congressional oversight committee reveal that foreign companies have been concealing capital repatriation by overstating the value of their exports, despite the absence of incoming payments and in spite of uncertainty over the entry of an equivalent amount due to the system of consignment where payment is demanded only upon the mother companies' receipt of such "exports." Meanwhile, data on imports have been understated through the exclusion of figures on products that came in through tax-free zones (such as export-processing zones), mostly electronic parts and other raw materials for the local export industry. Through such means, an estimated \$47.8 billion was fraudulently removed from the country by foreign companies from 1999 to 2001.

For 2002, an estimated \$11.4 billion at the minimum was brought out by these companies in the same manner.

"Miscalculations." In the face of the questions raised by the IMF, international banks and even a number of congressmen, the regime is making the lame excuse that there has been a miscalculation and that none of the doctoring was done on purpose. According to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the overstated export figures and understated import figures were accidental. The BSP said that since 2000, statistics on balance of trade and balance of payments surpluses have been overstated.

But according to Rep. Joey Salceda, who chairs the congressional oversight committee that is investigating the government statistical anomalies, the figures involved are too big to have been the result of simple miscalculation.

The pretty numbers announced by Macapagal-Arroyo definitely do not reflect the fact that the Filipino people are suffering from intense poverty. **AB**

the existing situation and social system. At the same time, the reactionaries are continually looking for more effective means of intensifying their exploitation and oppression of the people through charter change.

Reformists peddle the view that needed changes may be course through "improvements" in the constitution. Counterrevolutionary elements, in turn, are taking advantage of this view to douse cold water on the masses' rising anger over the obtaining exploitative and oppressive social system and derail them from the path of militant

protest, uprising and revolution.

Most of all, it is the US that is taking the lead in pushing for charter change. It wants to remove from the Philippine constitution obstacles to globalization and neoliberalization. US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone himself has admitted this and has warned that without charter change, the Philippines would be left behind in terms of development. Moreover, the US would also like the withdrawal of provisions that prohibit basing by US military forces and the entry of nuclear arms in the country. **AB**



The crisis concealed by Bush's warmongering

Monopoly capitalists could not stop applauding after hearing George W. Bush's speech in front of the US Congress on January 29. Aside from drumbeating and shouting anti-Iraq slogans, he repeated his promise of giving financial assistance to monopoly defense corporations and huge tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans.

Meanwhile, he offered no solutions to the issues now confronting ordinary Americans. In fact, he has been able to effectively use his repeated emphasis on the war against Iraq to obscure, conceal and dismiss the urgent economic and political issues now besetting their society.

Following are some statistics that mirror the real situation of the American economy which Bush is trying hard to cover up.

* 1.7 million Americans have lost their jobs since January 2001, and 8.6 million more are actively looking for work. The unemployment rate has reached 6%—the highest in more than a decade.

* Living conditions of 1.3 million Americans plummeted in 2001—the biggest number recorded in the past nine years.

* Since 2000, American corporations have regis-

tered a 23% bankruptcy rate, the highest in the US' entire history.

* In 2002, the number of applicants for emergency or temporary shelters rose 19%, the highest in 12 years.

* Up to 1.4 million Americans do not have health insurance after huge cuts in the national budget for health care.

The US economy posted a slight growth rate last year (1.4% compared to 0.3% growth in 2001) but this was merely due to brisker sales of cars and houses, bigger inventories and the infusion of funds into the defense industry. The GDP grew by 0.7% in 2002.

A \$157 billion budget deficit was recorded for 2002. Estimates place the budget deficit for 2003 at up to \$300-350 billion—a fall of almost half a trillion since 2000.

Between December 2000 and the end of the third quarter of 2002, the overall value of US equities fell by 38%, equivalent to \$6.65 trillion.

(These figures were gathered by the US Congressional House Appropriations Committee)

*Agrarian struggle in
Cagayan and Isabela*

Campaign to raise corn prices a SUCCESS

Farmers in Baggao, Cagayan launched a successful campaign to raise corn prices during the harvest season in September-October 2002. Prices per kilo of corn were raised from P6.30 to P6.80-P7.00. Not only local merchant-usurers agreed to raise corn prices; so did merchants from Tuguegarao City, the capital of Cagayan.

October 13 was market day. Many farmers were convinced to join the call bannered by a streamer hung at the Baggao market: "Join the confrontation! Raise corn prices!" On October 14, farmers led by KAGIMONGAN (Alliance of Cagayan Farmers) confronted four local merchant-usurers to demand the following:

- 1) allow other merchants to enter Baggao;
- 2) reduce interest on loans from P250 for every P1,000 per month (equivalent to 25% interest monthly, 150% per harvest or 300% annually) to 25 kilos of corn or P175 for every P1,000 per harvest (equivalent to 17.5% per harvest or 34% annually). Thus, interest rates paid by farmers will be reduced by almost 89%.

- 3) exempt farmers affected by calamities from paying interest—

FARMERS IN ISABELA RECOVER SEIZED LANDS

A GROUP OF FARMERS IN ISABELA BURNED A 500-HECTARE PLANTATION OF commercial trees to protest the DENR's seizure of their farmlands. These lands located along the boundaries of Echague and San Guillermo towns were subsumed by DENR into its Social Integrated Forest Management Agreement (SIFMA) program and planted to gmelina, narra and mahogany.

The farmers had long been opposing the seizure of their lands. Since 1998, they have been petitioning and holding dialogues with the local government and the DENR. But the latter merely shrugged off the farmers' grievances and responded with military operations and AFP terrorism.

Led by the Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Magbubukid in San Guillermo and Echague, the farmers acted as one to recover their lands and till them again. Collectively, they cleared the plantations they burned and farmed them once more.

that is, they should pay only the principal come the next harvest;

4) conduct negotiations before seizing the properties of farmers who are unable to pay their debts.

The peasants were able to achieve big victories through their collective action and perseverance in confronting merchant-usurers to assert their demands.

But success did not come easily. The farmers had to conduct a series of meetings to consolidate their ranks and unite on their moves.

Not a single merchant met with them during the first dialogue scheduled on October 5.

The peasants conferred once more and changed their tactics—they confronted the merchant-usurers one by one, with more of them doing so and not just the farmer-leaders. They first approached Sofronio Calimaran, the biggest merchant-usurer whose operations covered Sto. Domingo, Baggao. He refused to raise corn prices. On October 7, they con-

fronted Nena Caculitan, another merchant-usurer. She agreed to raise the price of corn from P6.30 to P6.70 per kilo.

The farmers conducted another meeting to lend more impetus to the campaign. They called for a big confrontation meeting with all merchant-usurers from Baggao and a mobilization in Tuguegarao City. They prepared for the intensification of the campaign to coincide with the October 13-17 commemoration of Peasant Week.

In Tuguegarao City, the farmers tried to hold a dialogue with provincial officials at the capitol but no one came to meet with them. They then sent a delegation to Tuguegarao to confront Magno Y. Lim, a merchant with province-wide operations.

During the confrontation, Lim agreed to raise the price of corn to P7.00 per kilo and waive transport fees from Baggao. Thus, the four merchants from Baggao were compelled to raise the price of corn bought from the farmers. **AB**

Peasant campaigns in Ilocos Region expanding

Farmers from the Ilocos Region have been gaining more numerous and broader victories. According to correspondence reports from the region, the farmers have been able to achieve many victories in economic and political struggles as a result of the campaigns they have waged. Aside from those previously reported in *Ang Bayan*, peasants from Ilocos were able to win the following victories in the last quarter of 2002:

Reduction in “resiko.” The farmers were able to reduce to a mere 3.75% (or three kilos for every 80 kilos) the weight shaved off the tobacco bought by trading centers (TC). The TCs used to shave off 10% due to *resiko* (reduction in the weight of tobacco due to loss of moisture) and the weight of the sacks and bamboo used to hold the tobacco leaves, among others.

Abolition of “sortido.” The farmers also succeeded in having the *sortido* system abolished, which they have long been campaigning for. *Sortido* refers to the system of grading the quality of tobacco. The peasants used to lose a lot of money through the *sortido* system because the TCs arbitrarily and fraudulently lowered the grade of the tobacco they bought from the farmers.

Raising coffee prices. Farmers successfully raised coffee prices in a cluster of barrios in three municipalities in Ilocos Sur to P60-P65 per *salop* (three liters dry measure). The price had previously been pegged at P45 per *salop* for six years. Coffee is the main crop culti-

vated by farmers in the area. The peasants waged collective action to assert their



demands before the sole merchant who monopolized the purchase of coffee beans in the area.

Resisting fraud in CLTs. In Cabugao, Ilocos Sur, farmers are waging a fierce campaign to recover lands seized from them. They had discovered that their landlord was selling 32 hectares of land that they had been amortizing for 15 years. PNREDC, the company that wants to buy the land, tried to force them to sign a document stating that it owned the land. The company failed to con-

vince the farmers to sign; instead, the peasants spontaneously rose in resistance. The farmers have since learned the the necessity of asserting their demands in an organized way. In the process, their level of militancy has been raised and their resistance has intensified. Peasants from other barrios have also joined their mass actions. Presently, they continue to till the land even as they persist in waging resistance to fully recover their lands.

Political gains. The concrete economic benefits that have been achieved through peasant campaigns in Ilocos have become a positive condition for launching big mobilizations and achieving more and bigger political victories. The farmers have learned to face up to comprador capitalists and government agencies, among others.

In asserting themselves, the farmers have achieved concrete benefits like roads, bridges and irrigation. In interior barrios, they have been able to implement health programs. They have tightened their bonds with other oppressed classes and gained the support of the middle forces. Along with all this, they have likewise launched other broader forms of action in relation to various political and social issues—the absence of genuine agrarian reform, the trampling of the national sovereignty through “Balikatan,” militarization in the countryside, the Macapagal-Arroyo regime’s ouster, warlordism, and the destruction of the environment, among others. **AB**

How Mang Ador got his land back

One of the cruelest means of exploiting the peasant masses in the coconut lands of Davao Oriental is known as *prenda arendo*. Through this system, a farmer indebted to a landlord cedes his land to the latter and whatever income is derived from it for a number of years. The interest comes to several hundred percent. Often, the hapless farmer serves as a mere farm worker on his land.

But in the guerrilla zones of Davao Oriental, the cruel system of *prenda arendo* is slowly being eradicated. The following article relates one of the first cases reported in the Southern Mindanao mass paper *Pasa Bilis*. These initial victories gave the organized masses the confidence to further advance the campaign to eradicate *prenda arendo*.

The campaign to recover lands covered by *prenda arendo* began in early 1999 in a barrio in the Davao Oriental countryside. Farmers confronted seven landlords to take back their mortgaged land. The campaign was led by the Barrio Organizing Committee and the local Party branch.

In 1999, Mang Ador, an organized peasant, turned to the local Party branch for help regarding his land problem. Mang Ador said that he had borrowed P12,000 from Konsehala Nida, a barangay official and small landlord, for his mother's burial expenses. In exchange, Konsehala Nida took possession of Mang Ador's land. She was to receive all the income from 24 harvests before returning the land.

The Party branch studied the case. The members saw that at the

price of P14 per kilo of copra then prevailing, and at the rate of 600 kilos of copra produced every harvest, the landlord had practically recovered the principal of P12,000 she had lent Mang Ador with the first two harvests, after subtracting production expenses. Nonetheless, because of the exploitative *prenda arendo* system, the landlord would continue benefiting from the land for another 22 harvests.

By the time Mang Ador presented his problem to the Party branch, Konsehala Nida had already been holding his land for four years. At the average of P13 per kilo of copra prevailing in this period, Konsehala Nida had already earned P117,000 from Mang Ador's coconut farm. It turns out that 875% in interest had been paid on top of the original P12,000 loan!

The peasants decided to confront the landlord. Twenty farmers trooped to Konsehala Nida's house, one morning in November 1999. Five of them were members of the Barrio Organizing Committee and one was a member of the local Party branch.

The peasants demanded the return of Mang Ador's land. Right in front of Konsehala Nida, they

made computations that showed the huge amount she had earned while in possession of the land. The landlord fell back and sat on her sofa, clutching her chest, and appeared to have fainted.

But this failed to move the farmers, who knew that Konsehala Nida had a penchant for theatrics. When she finally "regained consciousness," the peasants were still around, waiting for her reply.

She was left with no choice but to return Mang Ador's land. But she asked to be allowed to produce copra one last time before returning the land. There was only one more week to go before the next copra production season.

Mang Ador consented, on condition that they clean his coconut farm before turning it over to him. Konsehala Nida's husband, who actually did the copra production, readily agreed.

The confrontation was a success. Since then, mass movements have often been waged to recover lands subjected to *prenda arendo*. Eventually, landlords voluntarily returned the lands mortgaged to them, even before the peasants could confront them. **AB**



Dekada '70: A socially relevant film

From time to time, a politically and socially relevant film like *Dekada '70* that likewise ranks high in form and quality emerges from the commercialized world of Filipino movies.

Dekada '70 well reflected conditions and events under the US-Marcos fascist regime—the widespread and intense suppression, brutality and human rights violations as well as the people's fierce resistance. In a simple but clear manner, the film mirrored the social and political crisis during the dictatorship that gave rise to a surging mass movement and a burgeoning revolutionary movement.

The film was culled from a novel by Lualhati Bautista published in 1983 and 1988. The novel won a Palanca award in 1983. Bautista also wrote the script for the film, thus enabling the movie to stay true to the essence and message of the novel. The movie was entered by Star Cinema at the Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) in December 2002.

The movie's central character Amanda Bartolome (the mother role played by Vilma Santos) narrates her family's history and how their consciousness was raised. Although the movie stressed the significant issues within her family, it also described the context of social and historical events and the latter's interaction with their development as individuals and as a family. The story highlights the growth of Amanda's social awareness—throughout the 1970s—from being a meek and obedient woman to a

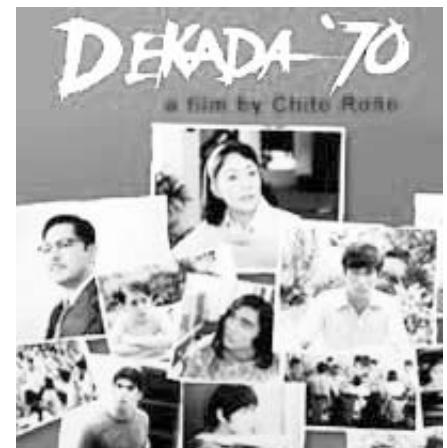
woman consciously involved in social issues.

Playing important roles in her development were her eldest son Jules (Piolo Pascual) who became an activist and joined the New People's Army; her son Em (Marvin Agustin) who was a critical writer; and the murder of her son Jason (Danilo Barrios) who was picked up for violating curfew.

In showing their experiences and the development of their consciousness—including that of the pater familias Julian (Christopher de Leon)—the movie blossoms with the drama of a family shattered and made whole by social crisis.

The most vivid scenes in the film that served to unify the story were those at the beginning and end, where Amanda is shown courageously standing her ground in a rally. In the first scene, Amanda likens herself to a hand that rocks the cradle—someone whose sole occupation was caring for her children but who wonders whether this was all that fate had in store for her.

In the last scene, she militantly shows her revulsion for the dictatorship. She stands up, not just as a mother to her children, but as a woman, highly conscious and in solidarity with the many others defending and fighting for the interests of the mother country's sons



Dekada '70 well reflected conditions and events under the US-Marcos fascist regime — the widespread and intense suppression, brutality and human rights violations as well as the people's fierce resistance.

and daughters.

Contrary to critics' views that the film's relevance is confined to the period it covered (from the mid-1960s to the early 1980s), *Dekada '70* reflects the continuing reality of the state's indiscriminate violation of human rights; the gradual growth in many people's consciousness spurred by it; the contradictions experienced by petty bourgeois families; and the stand taken by many mothers like Amanda whose consciousness has been awakened and who now work for the revolutionary change of society. **AB**



SUCCESSFUL AMBUSH LAUNCHED IN DAVAO DEL NORTE

Seven Philippine Army soldiers were killed and six wounded in an ambush by the New People's Army (NPA) on February 6 in Sitio Basak, Barangay Sto. Niño, Talaingod, Davao del Norte on patrolling troops from the 72nd IB. In a statement, Merardo Arce Command (NPA-Southern Mindanao) spokesperson Rigoberto Sanchez said that the offensive was conducted by the 1st Pulang Bagani Company. He said that the ambush was launched to punish the US-Macagal-Arroyo regime for unleashing its war machinery in the countryside.

The MAC commended the Red fighters who conducted the ambush for demonstrating exceptional combat skills and courage and for enjoying broad mass support especially from the national minorities. The MAC said that the ambush was also undertaken to punish the military for its forcible use of minorities in the counterrevolutionary war. Talaingod is part of the ancestral lands of the Ata-Manobo.

Seized from the ambush was an M60 light machine gun, an M14, four M16s, three M203 grenade launchers, a .45 caliber pistol, three communication radios, one global positioning system and 20 military packs.

Shamed, the AFP has been trying to cover up its defeat by saying that the offensive was not an ambush but a simple encounter.

6 SOLDIERS KILLED, 8 WOUNDED IN CLASHES WITH NPA

Two elements of the 24th IB were killed and five wounded in an encounter in Sitio Kararited, Barangay Cabauatan, Botolan, Zambales in the afternoon of February 7.

On January 18 in San Luis, Agusan del Sur, the NPA ambushed Philippine Army troops who were on their way back from a military operation. Two soldiers were killed in the firefight.

Meanwhile, the NPA Sergio Lobina Command in Samar reported seizing two M16 rifles in an ambush launched on December 30 in the town of Catarman, Northern Samar against 63rd IB troops. Two soldiers were killed and three others, including a lieutenant, were wounded in the ambush.

200 YOUTHS FROM METRO MANILA JOIN NPA IN 2002

Up to 200 youth activists from the cities joined the New People's Army in 2002. In a statement, Comrade Dino Kalayaan of the Kabataang Makabayan (KM)-National Capital Region said that this was a sign of the renewed growth in the number of youths going to the countryside to join the armed struggle. According to the KM, this was also spurred by the youth's intensifying discontent over the antipeople and pro-imperialist policies of the Macapagal-Arroyo regime.

OIL PRICES RAISED 4 TIMES

Oil companies raised prices of petroleum products in the Philippines four times in as many weeks from January to February. Caltex, Shell, Petron and other companies upped their prices on January 3, January 18, January 24 and February 3.

Overall, the biggest companies raised their prices by up to P1.60 per liter. Meanwhile, the prices of petroleum products are expected to rise anew by 80 centavos per liter in the third week of February.

In this regard, the Pagkakaisang mga Tsuper at Operator Nationwide (PISTON) expressed its opposition to the oil price hike and renewed its petition for a one peso increase in jeepney fares.

FIGHT AGAINST MINING OPERATIONS TO INTENSIFY

National minorities, peasants, environmentalists and church people in Tampakan, South Cotabato continue to launch protest actions against the destructive operations of the Tampakan Mining Resource Corp. (TMC). The protest actions are led by the Tampakan People's Crusade for Environmental Protection (TAPCEP).

The government granted TMC a Financial Technical Assistance Agreement (FTAA) in 2000 to conduct mining operations in the Sultan Kudarat-South Cotabato-Davao del Sur tri-boundary, which largely comprises the ancestral lands of the B'laan tribe. Studies show that there is a 6.7 billion ounce gold deposit and a 7.8 million ton copper deposit in the area—one of the world's richest mineral deposits.

First to be granted a permit to mine the area was the Australian firm Western Mining Corp. (WMC). But it allegedly withdrew and sold its FTAA to TMC due to the people's strong opposition to its operations. TAPCEP recently discovered that TMC is actually a dummy of WMC.

The people fiercely oppose the mining operations because of the various ailments that have resulted from them and the pollution that has caused fish kills and destroyed crops.

In rectification

A MESSAGE TO THE WORKERS OF PLDT

We wish to correct certain wrong pieces of information contained in a news item on the strike at the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company (PLDT) that appeared in p. 19 of *AB*'s January 2003 issue.

The news item wrongly specified that the strike was spurred by a "CBA deadlock." The real reason behind the strike of December 2002 was the termination of more than 500 regular workers. Management's pretext was that the company had an excessive number of workers. In fact, the layoffs were in accordance with its continuing antiworker policy of contractualization, which it pursues to further bleed the workers dry and increase company profits.

The *AB* editorial staff likewise criticizes itself for having quoted MKP head Pete Pinlac, as if he were an authority on, and a representative of, the PLDT workers. As is known to the workers of PLDT, Pinlac is a yellow labor leader who is an instrument of management in further oppressing the workers.

In fact, in 2000, Pinlac allowed the inclusion in the CBA of a provision favoring "out-sourcing" and "out-jobbing" that allows PLDT to hire persons other than its regular workers. He was able to do this through his scene-stealing hunger strike that derailed the collective and militant actions then being waged by MKP members.

Pinlac and his group allied with KPD, BMP and AGLO were ill-prepared for the strike last December. Pinlac tailed behind the strike; but instead of helping to consolidate it, he weakened it by smearing progressive union members and blocking their efforts to advance the struggle of the PLDT workers.

The strike failed to block plans to lay off PLDT workers, but the persistence, militancy and spirit of solidarity showed by the workers who advanced their struggle despite obstructive moves by the yellow leader Pinlac, were admirable.

This fighting spirit is a wellspring of strength that will serve the workers well in advancing future struggles against Pinlac and the antiworker schemes of PLDT.

PLANS TO TAX MIGRANT DOMESTIC HELPERS WITHDRAWN

The Hongkong government shelved in the second week of January its plans to impose new taxes and cut wages of domestic helpers in the face of continued and growing protest actions.

Prior to this, some 3,000 domestic helpers from the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Nepal and Sri Lanka rallied on January 12 in Victoria Park. From here, they marched towards government offices shouting the slogans "No to levy! No to wage cut!"

The following day, in the Philippines, relatives and friends of the domestic helpers picketed the Chinese embassy in Manila in support of the struggle. They were joined by Migrante members.

Filipinos in Hongkong led by the Asian Migrants Coordinating Body and the United Filipinos in Hongkong staged successive mass actions in December and the New Year to resist planned salary cuts.

ERRATUM

The *Ang Bayan* editorial staff wishes to correct the name of the Philippine Army colonel who was seriously wounded in an NPA ambush in Tupi, South Cotabato on January 4. Instead of Lt. Col. Eduardo Laden, the name should have been Lt. Col. Eduardo Andes, commander of the 27th IB based in Tupi. Also wounded were his companions Sgt. Johny Sinaon, Sgt. Patriarch Detalla and Sgt. Pablito Canja.

CEASEFIRE DECLARED IN NEPAL

The Nepali government and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) declared a joint ceasefire on January 29.



According to CPN (M) leader Prachanda, the revolutionary forces agreed to the demand for a ceasefire after the government withdrew the "terrorist" label on the CPN, the rewards offered for their arrest and the Interpol arrest warrants for CPN leaders.

On the other hand, the Nepalese prime minister expressed support for a proposal to transfer power to an elected government.

The CPN has reconstituted its negotiating team. This is the second time the CPN is holding talks with the government. The first was in August 2001. The negotiations bogged down on the revolutionary movement's main demand to abolish the constitutional monarchy. Armed struggle broke out once more in November 2001.

Before the ceasefire declaration, two high-ranking officials of the Nepal Armed Police Force (APF) were killed in an ambush by CPN fighters on January 26.

Inspector General Krishna Mohan Shrestha and Assistant Inspector Surya Bahadur were killed in Lalitpur, outside the Nepali capital of Kathmandu.

Shrestha, commander in chief of the APF, was the highest-ranking police official killed since 1996.

PAKISTANIS ANXIOUS OVER RACISM IN THE U.S.

Hundreds of Pakistani-American youths hurriedly left for Canada in the last week of January. Thousands of others are waiting in Buffalo, New York, near the US-Canadian border, to have their documents processed for travel to Canada or other countries. They have been avoiding the newest round of repression being implemented by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

According to new policies issued in December 2002, Pakistanis are required to register with the INS and report to it from time to time after the Pakistani people were included in the US State Department's watchlist of nationalities.

There is widespread anxiety among Muslims in the US that they could be arrested and suppressed any time because of the "racial profiling" enforced by the Bush government. Racial profiling is a one-sided move by the US to keep watch over and suppress nationals allegedly involved in terrorism.